



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD & AGRICULTURE

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY

ROUND II

CFDA # 10.169

Specialty Crop Block Grant

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is pleased to announce the availability of \$1.2 million in Specialty Crop Block Grant funds to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. The funding for these competitive grants is made available by the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and nursery crops (including floriculture).

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

CDFA is seeking concept papers from eligible non-profit organizations, local government entities, for-profit organizations, and universities for projects that aim to increase the production of and access to California specialty crops in domestic and international markets.

In order to be eligible to participate, the applicant must reside or their business or educational affiliation must be in California. Those entities that are non-profit or for-profit, if awarded a grant, will be required to provide either verification of their non-profit status or a copy of a valid California Business License.

Please note: Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that directly benefit or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual.

FUNDING

The total amount available to be awarded is \$1.2 million. The maximum amount of any award shall not exceed \$125,000, with a minimum of \$50,000. The available funding must be expended within three (3) years.

CDFA PRIORITIES AND AREAS OF FOCUS FOR 2008

Project proposals must target the following CDFA priorities and areas of focus to be considered for funding under this Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA):

- Agricultural Education and Outreach
- Environmental Concerns/Conservation
- Nutrition and Food Security/Food Safety
- Plant Pest and Health Problems
- Trade Enhancement/Innovations

CDFA CRITERIA / REVIEW PROCESS

In addition to targeting specific priorities and areas of focus, CDFA's intent is to fund projects that can produce the highest degree of measurable benefits to California specialty crop producers in relation to each dollar spent. Applicants will be evaluated on the criteria set forth in the [Scoring Criteria Form](#).

CDFA will conduct two levels of review in the application process. The first level is an Administrative Review to determine whether NOFA requirements are met and if applicable, assess the applicant's past grant performance with CDFA. The second level is a Technical Review to evaluate the merits of the project.

CDFA recognizes that project proposals may address multiple priorities or areas of focus. However, applicants will need to select a single area of focus that their proposal targets for the CDFA review process. Multiple proposals can be submitted, but each proposal must identify a single area of focus.

TWO PHASE SOLICITATION PROCESS

CDFA competitive grant process is divided into two phases:

- Phase I, Concept Paper
- Phase II, Grant Proposal

In Phase I, CDFA must receive Concept Papers by the identified due date (refer to page 4). A Concept Paper is a short summary that describes the project, its impact, expected results and deliverables in layman's terms. Concept Papers must be clear, concise and follow the format and content outlined in this announcement in order to be invited to participate in Phase II.

In Phase II, applicants with the highest ranked concept papers will be invited to submit a Grant Proposal. A Grant Proposal is a more detailed description of the concept. The Grant Proposal package must include a detailed scope of work, measureable outcomes, a feasible implementation plan of project success, timeline, and a detailed budget. Please note an invitation to submit a full proposal does not guarantee funding for the project.

All applicants will be sent either a regret or invitation letter in response to their Concept Paper submittal(s) and regret or award notice in response to their Grant Proposal.

PHASE I- CONCEPT PAPER REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for review in Phase I, Concept Papers must meet all requirements outlined below:

- Submitted using the [Concept Paper Form](#)
- Not to exceed two pages in length on 8 ½ X 11 size paper
- Text should be no less than 10 point font type size (Times New Roman or Arial)

Concept Papers may be rejected if the above requirements are not met.

HOW TO SUBMIT CONCEPT PAPERS

CDFA strongly encourages applicants to submit electronically; however, if internet access is unavailable, CDFA will accept hard copy.

- **If submitting electronically:** CDFA must receive Concept Papers by the due date and time deadline at grants@cdfa.ca.gov in PDF format. The project name and identification as "Round II" must be clearly labeled in the subject line of the email. Submit multiple projects by separate emails to ensure acknowledgement of each project. An acknowledgement receipt will be sent by email within forty-eight hours indicating the Concept Paper was received.
- **If submitting by U.S. Mail:** One original hard copy of the Concept Paper with CD-ROM mailed to:

California Department of Food and Agriculture
Federal Funds Management Office
1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

If submitting multiple projects, please submit separately (one CD -ROM per Concept).
CDFA must receive Concept Papers no later than the due date and time deadline.

PHASE II- GRANT PROPOSAL PACKAGE REQUIREMENTS

Requirements and instructions for submitting the grant proposal package will be included in the invitation letter CDFA sends to successful applicants.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

- All grant awardees will be required to adhere to federal and State of California (State) regulations and grant terms and conditions. Please refer to CDFA's [Grant Guidance Package](#) to confirm that the requirements can be met before submitting a Concept Paper.
- Grantee funds must be expended within three (3) years.
- Administrative costs may not exceed five percent (5%) of the grant award amount.
- CDFA *may* allow advance payments on a bi-annual basis of up to fifty percent (50%) of the annual grant budget amount for grantees that document cash flow issues. Advance payment funds must be maintained and expended according to federal regulations that are referenced in CDFA's Grant Guidance Package.

SOLICITATION ASSISTANCE AND QUESTIONS

CDFA staff is available to provide applicants an understanding of CDFA's solicitation process and grant requirements; however, CDFA staff cannot provide assistance with writing Concept Papers or Grant Proposals.

Should you have questions about the solicitation process you may contact CDFA's Federal Funds Management Office via email at Grants@cdfa.ca.gov. A list of Frequently Asked Questions and Responses will be posted on the CDFA website every Wednesday after 3:00 p.m. PDT beginning September 10, 2008 until the Concept Paper due date

CDFA will not provide individualized feedback regarding declined Concept Papers or Grant Proposals.

DUE DATES / TIMELINE: TWO PHASE SOLICITATION PROCESS

Phase I	July 18, 2008	Funding solicitation and request for concept papers.
	October 14, 2008 by 4:30 p.m. PDT	Concept Paper Due Date
Phase II	October 28, 2008	Invitation letter to successful applicants.
	December 5, 2008 by 4:30 p.m. PDT	Grant Proposal Due Date
Award	January 2009	Anticipated funding of awarded proposals.